

# **Caversham and District Residents' Association**

## **Chairman's report 2021/2022**

We are delighted to be able to hold an AGM in person and to see our members as we emerge from the pandemic. The last Open Meeting was in November 2019, so it has been a while. For those unable to make the AGM, we will also be at the Church Fete in Caversham Court Gardens on Saturday 9 July. The committee is again meeting in person with Zoom as a back-up.

### **Emmer Green**

Residents Associations rely on a sufficient number of active volunteers and sadly there were too few for the Emmer Green Residents Association to continue. Following the decision at their AGM on 29 March to disband, CADRA has welcomed new members from Emmer Green and is now working through how best to represent local concerns and support practical work. We welcome comments and approaches as we establish the best way to operate across a wider area. As one of a number of initiatives, we hope to support a reprint of the book *Emmer Green, Past and Present*, which has been out of print for some years, and to provide copies for schools and libraries.

### **Planning**

Planning continues to be a major part of our work. We update our members by email after the monthly committee meeting and provide an update for the Caversham Bridge. Our monthly planning list is shared with other local groups and is available on our website, providing links to both CADRA comments and to the full plans. Reading Golf Club has been a major focus and more recently Caversham Park. Other applications north of the river are mainly small, though often significant.

Small applications on the border with South Oxfordshire have caused concern and we continue to follow progress towards a new joint Local Plan including the Vale of White Horse which, by 2025, will replace the plan adopted in 2020. The consultation just launched examines key issues. We will not see the preferred options until early next year. Across the river, two of the major sites north of the station have been approved, bringing major changes. We await proposals for the Drews and Carters sites. Legislation on Design Codes is promised but it is still unclear how this would operate. Details of planning within the new Levelling Up Bill are emerging. The good news is that communities will still be able to comment on individual planning applications.

Kim Pearce, who was an invaluable member of the committee has now moved away from Caversham but is still providing some transitional support. We would welcome more input from anyone with interest or experience in planning.

### **Local Heritage**

CADRA remains active on the Conservation Area Advisory Committee providing important links to Senior Planning Managers and to the newly appointed Conservation and Urban Design Officer, as well as a strong informal network across Reading.

### **Flood Alleviation**

In December 2021, the Environment Agency reported that they had looked at various options to reduce flood risk in the north Reading and Lower Caversham area but had not been able to find a cost beneficial option. They therefore recommended that the scheme is not progressed. The Thames Valley Flood Scheme is looking at ways to reduce flood risk across the whole of the River Thames and its tributaries.

## **Caversham Centre**

We share initiatives with the Caversham Traders Association which is active in promoting Caversham Centre. Despite a difficult two years, the centre remains buoyant with new small businesses starting up.

## **Safer Caversham**

The North Reading Safer Neighbourhood Forum meets regularly with representatives from the Police, RBC and community members. It is an important mechanism for a combined proactive approach to local problems. Police resources are limited, and local people can help by providing local intelligence and by reporting crime which significantly influences the allocation of scarce resources. We are grateful to Alan Wright who represented CADRA on the forum until very recently. Jill Dibben has kindly taken on this role in addition to her duties as Treasurer.

## **Website and Facebook**

The website and the Facebook Page allow us to reach more people across Caversham and to share information more widely. Lloyd People who set up the website has now stood back from the Committee but continues to provide support. Malcolm Pemble works hard to keep the website up to date in addition to his work on planning research and the membership system. Aidan Costello is finding fascinating local history and historic images to share on Facebook and Mo Prins shares information for local parents.

## **Caversham Bridge Newspaper**

The paper continues to flourish, bringing detail on the extraordinary range of things going on locally. You can subscribe for £5 a year. Contact [subscriptions@cavershambridge.org](mailto:subscriptions@cavershambridge.org) or write c/o Church House, Church Street, RG4 8AX. Individual copies are available at the Nood Store, Fourbears Books or True Food Co-op. You can also view the paper online at <http://www.cavershambridge.org/>.

## **Membership**

A substantial membership keeps CADRA strong, so new members are always welcome. Subscriptions and renewals can be paid online by Paypal or credit card, as well by bank transfer or standing order. We still accept cheques - where possible to cover three years to save time for both sides. Membership forms are available from the library or Waltons Jewellers. Email is the main method of communication so **please let us know if you change your email address and look out for CADRA messages going to Spam**. Emails about membership renewal now come via a membership system which allows you to view and update your details at from the link on the website – “Join Us” <https://membermojo.co.uk/cadra/signin>

Members on email receive an update each month and a link to the newsletter twice a year. If those are not reaching you, please let us know. Members not on email receive paper copies of newsletters.

Jacque Tomson, membership secretary for many years, has moved away from Caversham. We are grateful to Adrian Goddon for taking on the role.

## **And finally ...**

I pay tribute to the work of all the committee, and to the support team. I would like to record my thanks to them for all their work through another year with new challenges. We are always keen to hear from anyone who could offer support in some way so that Caversham – and Emmer Green - can always be *a Great Place to Live!*

*Helen Lambert, CADRA Chair*

*May 2022*